

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

Berlin

59-H

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Action

Control: 11719
Rec'd: AUGUST 16, 1961
2:23 PM

019

USIA

Info

FROM: BERLIN

SS

TO: Secretary of State

G

SP

NO: 217, AUGUST 16, 6 PM

SA

L

SB

PRIORITY

SO

EUR

ACTION DEPARTMENT 217, INFORMATION BONN 190.

IO

D

FX

FOR USIA - FROM MURROW TO WILSON

INR

LIMIT DISTRIBUTION

RMR

PLEASE CONVEY ON MY BEHALF FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS TO THE SECRETARY AND OTHERS WHO MAY BE CONCERNED: THEY ARE BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH MAYOR BRANDT, WITH THE MOST INFLUENTIAL BERLIN NEWSPAPER, NEWS SERVICE, RADIO AND TELEVISION EDITORS, AND WITH A SENIOR OFFICER OF THE GERMAN PRESS OFFICE IN BONN WITH WHOM I HAVE HAD PREVIOUS CONTACT AND WHOSE JUDGEMENT I VALUE ESPECIALLY. THESE INTERVIEWS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH EDITORS, WERE UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH I AM CONVINCED REPRESENTED MOST SERIOUS REACTIONS WHICH COULD NOT HAVE BEEN CONCERTED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY PRESENCE HERE.

IN ESSENCE THESE PEOPLE FEEL THAT WE ARE FACING A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE WHICH ENDANGERS QUITE SERIOUSLY OUR POSITION. THIS IS BASED ON THE ABSENCE OF ANY SHARP AND DEFINITE FOLLOWUP ACTION SINCE THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT. HOWEVER THIS FEELING OF LETDOWN IS THE GREATER BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH HAD HAD SUCH A LARGE READERSHIP AND TELEVISION FOLLOWING AND HAD EVOKED SUCH WIDESPREAD PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE AS A PROMISE OF FIRMNESS. I HAVE NOT BEEN IMPRESSED BY GERMAN COMPLAINTS OF THE LACK OF DISPLAY OF US MILITARY PRESENCE SINCE SECTOR BORDERS WERE CLOSED. I REALIZE ALSO THAT THE LONGSTANDING BELIEF THAT US SUPPORT IS

THE

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, SEC. 3.3~~CONFIDENTIAL~~REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY IS
PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"

NVA-86-225

By *RMH* NARA Date *7/87*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2- 217, AUGUST 16, 6 PM FROM BERLIN

THE MAIN AND ONLY GERMAN PROTECTION MAKES THEM IMPATIENT OF OUR DESIRE TO ACT IN CONCERT WITH NATO ALLIES. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THESE PREJUDICES AND DISCOUNTING NUMEROUS EMOTIONAL ARGUMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE TO ME I AM NEVERTHELESS CONVINCED THAT WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS THE SURRENDER OF EAST BERLIN TO ULBRICHT WITH ALL THAT THIS IMMEDIATELY IMPLIES HAS BEEN A SHOCK SO SEVERE THAT IT CAN GRAVELY AFFECT OUR FUTURE RELATIONS, FIRST, WITH THE CITY OF BERLIN AND ITS LEADERS, AND SECOND WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC ONCE THE EXTENT OF THE DISILLUSIONMENT HERE IS RECOGNIZED IN BONN.

I AM CONCERNED LESS WITH SUBSTANTIVE ACTS THAN WITH A PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE WHICH I FEEL CAN AND SHOULD BE CORRECTED. SINCE EVEN THE MOST UNINFORMED HERE IS WELL AWARE OF THE RING OF SOVIET MILITARY FORCES AROUND THE CITY I DO NOT FEEL THAT WE ARE BEING ASKED TO DO ANYTHING UNREASONABLE. WHAT I DO RECOMMEND HOWEVER IS THAT WE SHOULD TAKE A NUMBER OF STEPS WHICH NEED NOT NECESSARILY AFFECT THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR POSITION BUT WHICH IF SUFFICIENTLY WELL PUBLICIZED WOULD EVIDENCE THE INTEREST AND SUPPORT WHICH WE HAVE SO OFTEN PLEDGED. SIMPLY AS AN EXAMPLE, SUCH A RELATIVE SIMPLE STEP AS THE PUBLICIZED RUPTURE OF CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS OF NEW CULTURAL AGREEMENTS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES WOULD MAKE AN IMPRESSION AS WOULD A WELL PUBLICIZED AND SHARPLY WORDED STATEMENT OF WHAT VIOLATIONS OF EXISTING COMMITMENTS THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE BY ALLOWING ULBRICHT TO CLOSE THE BORDERS.

I AM AWARE OF THE CONFIDENT* NEED OF BERLINERS FOR REASSURANCE AND OF THE IRRITATION THIS OFTEN CAUSES. THE POINT I WANT TO MAKE AS STRONGLY AS POSSIBLE IS THAT I AM CONVINCED WE RUN THE RISK OF AN ABRUPT AND SERIOUS WORSENING OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE OF BERLIN AND THEN WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC UNLESS WE TAKE SOME IMMEDIATE STEPS TO REASSURE THEM SINCE THEY ARE NOW IN A VERY LOW STATE OF MIND. THERE IS VERY LITTLE THAT USIA AS AN AGENCY CAN DO ABOUT THIS UNTIL WE ADOPT THE NECESSARY PUBLIC ATTITUDE.

COMMENT;

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-3- 217, AUGUST 16, 6 PM FROM BERLIN

COMMENT: I ANTICIPATE BERLINERS WILL LABEL OUR AUG 15 LETTER OF PROTEST BELATED AND TEPID. NO ONE HERE ASKING LARGE VIOLENT ACTION MERELY SOME ACTION, SOME PROOF THIS IS NOT "ANOTHER SAMPLE OF 'HITLER'S TAKE OVER OF RHINELAND'". I THINK THE TIMETABLE FOR THIS CRISIS HAS BEEN STEPPED UP VERY CONSIDERABLY AND THERE IS REAL DANGER THAT BERLINERS WILL CONCLUDE THEY SHOULD TAKE THEMSELVES, THEIR BANK ACCOUNTS AND MOVEABLE ASSETS TO SOME OTHER PLACE. WHAT IS IN DANGER OR BEING DESTROYED HERE IS THAT PERISHABLE COMMODITY CALLED HOPE.

LIGHTNER

KEA

NOTE: USIA CABLE SECTION NOTIFIED 3:45 PM 8-16-61 CWO JRL.

* AS RECEIVED.

Advance copy to (USIA) 8-16-61, 5 p.m., FMH

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~